



Complaints Policy

Overview

Summary

Policy Working Group

Email/Contact info

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Document Information

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Policy

This policy sets out the steps for raising and dealing with concerns and complaints raised regarding the operations of the Petone Football Club (Petone FC or the Club). It aims to:

- Support people to resolve minor issues on their own;
- Give clear guidance for making, dealing with and resolving complaints;
- Ensure the approach taken to deal with complaints is fair, transparent and consistently applied in all areas of the Club.

Background

Petone FC is committed to supporting everyone, including participants, coaches, volunteers, club members and supporters to participate in an environment that is respectful, safe and fair. It is important that anyone who raises a complaint feels they are being listened to and feels comfortable that their concern or complaint is acknowledged, treated in confidence, reviewed and responded to quickly, fairly and promptly.

Petone FC provides a range of football programmes and other experiences, and it is possible that its members, or the wider public and football community, may have a grievance with any of the services they have received or with the behaviour of club members, players, officials or staff.

Due to the public profile of Petone FC, it is possible that the club may also receive complaints from people who are not club members or customers (i.e. general public). Petone FC is committed to ensuring that these and all complaints are dealt with efficiently and the Club must ensure they are confident that their response to the concern or complaint is fair and reasonable, and that it is dealt with in a timely manner.

Definitions

In this policy:

Complaint means any written or verbal statement or question alleging a grievance involving conduct, process or implementation of products or services (and behaviour) by any of the club's members, Executive Committee or staff. See 'Applications' below for full description.

Feedback means the policy statement the Club makes available so interested parties know how they can offer feedback or lay a complaint.

Club member means a person(s) as defined in the Petone FC Club Constitution, excluding an elected officer or co-opted officer, or a person(s) appointed by the Executive Committee, which is identified separately below. This does include all registered junior and senior players within the given year, including pre and post season, including skill centres and holiday programmes.

Executive Committee – the group of club officials elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Club.

Staff or Staff member means a co-opted officer, an elected official – other than the Executive Committee (i.e. junior, women’s, advisory groups), positions appointed by the Executive Committee (including employee or contractor undertaking duties or holding a position of responsibility within the club) as outlined by the Club’s Constitution.

Principles

The following principles should be kept in mind when applying this policy:

1. Addressing problems informally and face-to-face where possible;
2. Treating others fairly, equally and in a way that is respectful of their gender, ethnicity and beliefs;
3. Maintaining relationships and keeping all parties safe;
4. Use appropriate processes to resolve complaints and restore relationships

Effective date

This policy supersedes all previous policies dated prior to the effective date of this policy.

This policy is effective from 01 May 2024.

Application

Complaints can be made by or about anyone involved in Petone FC. This includes:

- Elected club officials
- Club committee members
- Players
- Coaches and managers
- Supporters
- Club members and their families
- Employees
- Contractors
- Service Providers

Complaints may be relating to such things as actions or decisions made by the club in accordance with its day-to-day operations, processes, disagreements, unprofessional or upsetting behaviour, or delays or failure to communicate about matters affecting a person.

Where a complaint involves actions affecting children or vulnerable adults, this policy should be read in conjunction with the NZF Code of Conduct, Petone FC Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Petone FC Preventing Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Complaints may involve:

- Organisation management issues
- Conflicts of interest
- Unsporting behaviour (off-field)
- Disrespectful behaviour
- Bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination
- Abuse of power

- Health and safety risks
- Offensive/insulting language or behaviour

Any complaint relating to a game or tournament run under the Capital Football and New Zealand Football regulations is subject to those regulations and the associated complaints policy and process.

Informal resolution

Petone FC encourages anyone with a complaint or concern to first make the person aware that the behaviour or material is unwelcome and /or offensive.

For more serious issues, or if it is too difficult to inform the person, or if the unacceptable behaviour continues, the complainant should report the complaint to a team manager and/or club committee member (i.e. Junior Chair or Club Chair).

Where the complainant wishes, the team manager or club committee member may speak to the alleged harasser on their behalf. This may result in issues being resolved, or informal mediation or reconciliation may be suggested as an option. All complaints or concerns should be treated in confidence and the privacy of all parties managed accordingly.

Informal mediation should treat the complaint not as an offence but as a breakdown in a relationship. The aim of informal mediation is not to establish whether the harassment allegations are true, or to apportion blame, or to supply justice for a wronged person. Rather, informal mediation focuses on repairing the relationship, especially on forging an agreement between the parties over how they will act towards each other in the future. The person selected to carry out the informal mediation/reconciliation shall be agreed to by both parties.

Formal resolution

If the complaint is of a serious nature or informal resolution is not deemed appropriate or has failed then a formal resolution may be required. This should be reported promptly to the Club Captain.

The Executive Committee Chair will appoint a person to manage the complaint and ensure the complaint is treated in confidence and the privacy of all parties managed accordingly. A formal complaint needs to be expressed in writing and should include all the details necessary to facilitate an investigation of the matter, names of all parties and specifics of the incident. Where appropriate, the complainant may wish to include what outcome they are seeking.

Any conflicts of interest relating to the complainant and other parties within the club should be identified and managed appropriately during the investigation.

Process

Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Executive Committee will proceed as follows:

1. The Club Secretary will forward the complaint to the Executive Committee Chair who will assign a person to manage the complaint and facilitate the investigation (the investigator).
2. The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days of receipt by the Club Secretary or the investigator. If additional information is needed this will be sought by the investigator.
3. The subject of the complaint will be notified that a complaint has been made against them and invited to respond to the complaint.
4. All parties, including committee members, will be advised against discussing the matter openly and the information will be treated in confidence.

5. Additional information may be gathered if necessary and this may include interviewing of other names relevant parties, recording dates, times, dates and alleged events using the witnesses' words and checking with the witness to ensure accuracy.
6. All parties should be encouraged to bring a support person to any interview.
7. If deemed appropriate, the Club may choose to escalate the complaint to Capital Football, or seek guidance regarding the approach and management of the complaint.
8. If deemed appropriate, the Club may choose to escalate the complaint to the NZ Police if the matter is a serious non-football complaint.

Following the investigation, a response shall be prepared and shall include a finding as to outcome and a recommendation made regarding any decision or course of action regarding the complaint. This will be communicated to the Executive Committee. Once ratified this will be communicated to all affected parties.

The investigator may feel unable to decide one way or the other on the evidence. In this case the decision will be that the complaint cannot be established.

All meetings, discussions, and interviews should be fully documented throughout the investigation.

If the allegation is of a serious nature including assault, of sexual nature, involving a minor, the New Zealand Police must be notified immediately.

People can also make a complaint about sexual or racial harassment to the Human Rights Commissioner. If behaviour is sexual or indecent assault, violent, threatening or cyberbullying, people can complain to the New Zealand Police.

Possible outcomes of a complaint

The outcome of a complaint will be dependent on the findings following the investigation but may include one or more of the following:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities
- An explanation or apology
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in the future
- A follow up on any changes made as a result of the complaint
- Undertaking by the subject of the complaint to take positive steps to ensure the behaviour does not reoccur
- Removal of the subject of the complaint from their role
- Cancellation of club membership

Petone FC does not have any jurisdiction over criminal offences and such offences should be reported to the NZ Police. The club should be made aware of any such offences so that they can take any action to ensure the ongoing safety of its club members, elected officials and appointed positions.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may appeal the decision and request a review, guidance or support from an external mediation service, e.g. SportNZ.

Policy approval

This policy was approved by the Executive Committee of Petone FC with effect from 01 May 2024.

Signed:

Matt Bliss
Chairman

Related Documents	
Policy	Code of Conduct Privacy Policy Preventing Bullying and Harassment Policy Health and Safety Policy
Legislation	Privacy Act 2020
NZ Football Policy	New Zealand Football – Privacy Policy Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy Code of Conduct

Revision History			
Version	Date	Summary/Description	Author
0.1	November 2023	First draft of policy for review	Policy Working Group
0.2	January 2024	Updated definitions and wording related to privacy	Policy Working Group
1.0	April 2024	Final version submitted to Executive Committee for approval and publishing	Policy Working Group